

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 008268

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: VISIT OF INSPECTOR GENERAL KRONGARD TO JORDAN

REFS: A) STATE 187266 B) STATE 187184

1. (U) Embassy Amman grants country clearance and warmly welcomes the visit of Inspector General Howard J. Krongard from November 1-2 and November 9-12, 2005 for the purpose of observing post facilities and operations, including ISU and JIPTC.

2. (U) The embassy point of contact is Management Counselor Perry M. Adair. Contact numbers for Mr. Adair are as follows: office: 962-6-590-6710; home: 962-6-593-8742; cell: 962-6-79-560-8992; fax 962-6-592-0163. The Embassy's after-hours telephone number is: 962-6-590-6500. The contact for ISU is Richard Boohaker: office 962-6-590-6841; cell: 962-6-79-663-0623.

3. (SBU) Hotel reservations, airport meet/assist and all ground transportation have been arranged. Hotel reservations are confirmed for the nights of 11/1/05 and 11/9-11/05 at the Sheraton Amman Al Nabil Hotel & Towers, located at 5th Circle, Amman 11184. Telephone: 962-6-593-4111; FAX: 962-6-593-4222.

4. (U) Valid visas are required for entry into Jordan. Visas may be obtained at Queen Alia airport; however, Embassy suggests visitors obtain their visas prior to arrival, as there can be long lines for visa issuance at the airport. Money can be exchanged at Queen Alia airport, at the hotel, or at the Embassy.

5. (U) Each visitor, regardless of length of stay, must have fiscal data to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to the visit. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES overtime (for such services as airport expediting, cashier accommodation exchange, control room staffing, representational event support), travel and per diem costs incurred by post personnel in support of visitor's field travel, rental of vehicles and other equipment, long distance telephone calls, office supplies, gasoline and other vehicle maintenance costs, departure tax and other airport fees.

6. (U) The month of Ramadan (which began on October 4 and lasts until approximately November 3) is the holiest period in the Muslim year. During Ramadan most local restaurants will be closed daily between dawn and sunset except those establishments catering exclusively to tourists. Some restaurants may be open for take-out only during the fasting hours. All establishments serving alcohol, including bars in hotels, will remain closed throughout Ramadan. Foreign tourists may be served alcohol in their hotel rooms. Eating and smoking in public, especially in the streets and in taxis, cars, or buses, are strongly discouraged. Dressing in a manner inconsistent with Islamic norms is strongly discouraged. Conservative dress is recommended. Official working hours for Jordanian government offices and ministries are 0900-1400 hours, Sunday through Thursday. Foreign Service National employees of Embassy Amman are on reduced six-hour workdays. Traveling by vehicle between the hours of 1500 and 1800 can sometimes be problematic due to traffic congestion and accidents.

7. (U) Threat assessment: Since late 1999, there has been a series of serious, confirmed terrorist threats and disrupted terrorist plots targeting U.S. interests in Jordan. Transnational terrorist groups, as well as less sophisticated local elements, have demonstrated the capability to pose threats here. Anti-western sentiment, though less pronounced since the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom, has been sparked on occasion by regional events, particularly those related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, to a lesser extent, Iraq.

In May 2004, two men were arrested for plotting to assassinate diplomats in Amman, including an American Embassy employee. In April 2004, Jordanian authorities disrupted a plan to attack the American Embassy and Jordanian government buildings with explosive-laden vehicles.

In September 2003, 13 were arrested for plotting attacks against U.S. and Jordanian targets, including the American Embassy in Amman. In May 2003, three persons

connected to the Zarqawi network were arrested for planning attacks against foreigners and tourist sites. The October 28, 2002 assassination of a U.S. diplomat in Amman outside his residence was ultimately linked to the Zarqawi network. Jordanian authorities arrested the assassins in December 2002.

The most recently published U.S. government security alerts state that extremist groups continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. interests worldwide. Crime is generally not a serious problem for travelers in Jordan, although petty theft is common in the downtown Amman Hashimiyah Square area and near the Roman amphitheater. In the narrow streets of the old city and at some of the more popular tourist sites, crowded conditions invite pickpockets and other petty criminals. We urge travelers to be more guarded in these areas so that they do not present easy opportunities to criminals. Purse-snatchings in central and western Amman are reportedly on the increase. In several cases, thieves in moving vehicles snatched pedestrians' purses and drove off. In some instances, victims were injured when they were unable to free themselves from their purses. When carrying a purse, it would be wise to conceal it if possible, to avoid walking near the road within reach of passing vehicles, and to walk towards the flow of traffic.

18. (U) Travel guidelines:

American citizens traveling in Jordan should exercise caution, be alert and stay informed of regional and local events that could quickly impact the security environment in the country. Travelers should avoid large crowds and demonstrations and take measures to avoid areas where they are most likely to occur (city centers, universities, refugee camps), particularly during periods of increased tension. It is also recommended to maintain a low profile and not establish predictable patterns of movement, even if only visiting for a short period. Recent worldwide USG security announcements continue to alert American travelers that terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. Therefore, facilities where Americans or foreigners are likely to congregate such as hotels, nightspots, restaurants, and places of worship should be considered as potential targets. Travelers should stay alert when attendance at such locations is necessary. Taxis are the only form of public transportation that is recommended.

As Jordan is a predominantly Muslim country, cultural sensitivities should be observed. Female travelers should dress conservatively and not travel alone, particularly in areas where western visitors are uncommon. Western visitors and residents have reported incidents of sexual harassment, assault and unwelcome advances of a sexual nature. Such incidents, while troubling, are not common.

19. (U) Other:

For further information, see the State Department's Consular Information Sheet for Jordan at <http://travel.state.gov/jordan.html> and link from that site to the most recent Public Announcement on Travel in the Middle East and South Asia and the most recent Worldwide Caution.

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